

## MAUNDY THURSDAY

### The Last Supper in Art

The background should be dark, foreboding. Mood has changed.

Disciples more contending with each other than paying attention to Jesus.

The immediate prospect of death focuses the fundamental priorities.

Jesus might well have been thinking about himself. He might have been thinking about heaven and the promise of an eternal glory. Not so.

In this last moment, Jesus mind was fixed where it always had been: on the Kingdom of Heaven in this world, among all of humanity.

His manner was that of a servant – as it had always been. And he demonstrated that as a lesson – his final and most important lesson.

And then he assumed an astonishing mantle of authority. A new commandment!

That you love one another. Not advice – a command.

Not friendliness, although that's good.

Not sociability with acquaintances, although that may be a blessing.

Not ordinary human bonds and affections, even though they are God's gifts.

The love that Christ commands, and that he made his last teaching on this earth goes far beyond all of those.

Love that is willing to make sacrifices that encroach on our own comfort and security.

Love that is willing to accept and serve the neighbor, even the one that is not like us, and whom we may not like very much. It is love that will accept and accept willingly our own vulnerability.

Having said and done those things, Jesus gave them a sign that would seal the message of his life and teaching and propel them down the generations and across all the worlds people.

That is the kingdom of heaven.

That is the Gospel.

That is Christ.

